

The Navy Lark Appreciation Society Newsletter

# NAVY DAYS



**A**NYONE who saw Jon Pertwee larking about yesterday would hardly have guessed that this was really a sad occasion.

The Royal Navy frigate Troutbridge was leaving London's Tower Pier to meet her doom at a breaker's yard.

But a touch of hilarity was inevitable. On board were three crewmen from her fictitious sister-ship, HMS Troutbridge, which gets into all sorts of scrapes in the BBC radio series "The Navy Lark."

Chief Petty Officer

## Navy Lark on a ship's last voyage

Pertwee suspended himself between two gun barrels with the aid of Ronnie Barker — alias Able Seaman Johnson — who is pictured behind him.

And, for good measure, Sub-Lieutenant Leslie Phillips, yelled his customary navigation order: "Left hand down a bit." Picture by GEOFFREY DAY.

## Series 15 Scripts



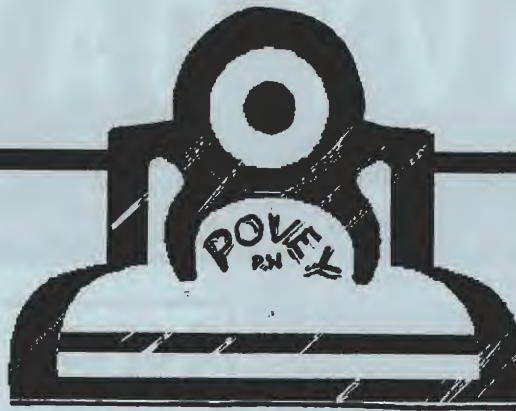
Heather Chasen has been hugely helpful to the Navy Lark fraternity since our last edition. A number of scripts from series 15 have been located and forwarded to the society. These original documents retain various annotations. Each script documents the date time and studio booked for the instalment to be recorded. Heather has added the sequence for the two shows to be recorded. She also let us know that it was customary for her to draw in her script books during earlier shows. The official rehearsal times began at 4.30PM and the last show was recorded by around 10.00PM, with just a single tea break at 6.00PM. Some evenings could be quite 'long', and drawing was hugely absorbing whilst not overly distracting. Let's hope Heather finds an earlier script with sketches one day. It would be great fun to share the memories those drawings contain.



## NEW BOOK

In the bookshops right now is a new book by Ronnie Barker. He is sharing his personal archive of photos and memories in a new autobiography. Readers of Radio Times were given a taster of the forthcoming publication in September 2004. This publication will, no doubt, add hugely to our predilection for Ronnie's particular brand of humour and raise him further in the nation's psyche as a national treasure.





Welcome aboard another edition of Navy Days.

Firstly I must apologise to you all for the visual quality of the last magazine. Our printer had had problems with his machinery in the week before we had our slot there, and I feel he was still getting to grips with the repairs when our magazine went through the system. It was a huge shock to see such a dark magazine in front of me - not what had been put in to the company. I trust this issue is easier on the eye.

As mentioned on the front page, Heather Chasen has been hugely helpful to the society by locating and forwarding scripts from series 15. These shows were co written by Laurie Wyman and George Evans. Sadly, when Mrs Evans last contacted us it was to say George was now very poorly, blind and frail and in very poor health. I'm sure you wish Mrs Evans strength and fortitude in her duty of care.

Heather's scripts are delightfully annotated and indicate clearly the sequence of the two shows to be recorded on each of the Sunday evenings in August, September and October 1975 at the Paris Theatre. The covers and pages have further notations to help locate scripted scenes Heather was in. It is fascinating to see these hand typed documents. These days, when word processors exist almost everywhere the written word is used, it is impossible to recall the days of the humble typewriter and the need to repeatedly re-type a 35 page document for all cast members and the production team to use in a studio!

April Walker has written, and gave me plenty of warning to set my video for her performance in 'Waking the Dead' this Summer. What could not be factored in was my inability to set the machine properly! But thanks to April for her endeavours. April and May were spent in a new play "Amazonia" which is about Col. Percy Harrison Fawcett, an explorer who was lost in the Amazon jungle in 1925. April played his wife and had to dramatically age on stage from 50 to 84 in front of the audience. "She was a wonderful character with humour and courage" writes April. Hopefully, the play will travel the country at a future date.

Ronnie Barker recalls in his auto-biography "Dancing in the Moonlight" receiving scripts (also known as cue copies) with just a *single* character's lines typed on its pages. (It was too expensive to provide a fully typed copy of a play for each actor, and the cue copy offered each player their complete spoken part without any context to other characters or dramatic scenarios). It was up to the cast to work out the plot of the play by looking at their scripted lines. Each speech would be preceded and terminated with another character's name, and 3 or 4 words of their dialogue. Cue Copies were invariably well used (loose?) pages with brown paper covers. Ronnie tells readers that it was not possible to fully appreciate the whole sense of the play from any single booklet. Each player had to listen (desperately carefully) to each speech - and the last few words in particular - in order to get a sense of what was going on. Chaos was common place until the cast had run through their lines a number of times and the play started to take shape. These scripts provided money-saving means for theatre companies to put on different programmes weekly with limited resources. How lucky we are to have access to the original material from The Navy Lark days. The actors' voices immediately fill one's imagination and the scene is instantly remembered as those scripted lines are scanned once more.

Huge thanks again must go to new and old members alike, especially to new members for being enthusiastic enough to get on board knowing that Mr Phillips has no idea in which direction we are heading and that Pertwee has probably flogged the fuel and we can't get there anyway.





Singled out this time for terrific archive work is Steve Arnold for his excellent job of transferring The Navy Lark movie onto DVD. This is now in the library, and those of you yet to see the movie can now choose either the VHS or the DVD versions. Contact Iden Adams.

Phil Skye has been hugely busy on our behalf and has found cast appearances, ephemera and recordings in all sorts of places and we are indebted to him for his energy and care. Likewise Stephen Marshall, whose memory astounds me! I receive fascinating letters which draw together widely disparate performances, always a smashing read. William Hardwick, whose personal radio archive is awesome, never fails to find interesting performances by the Troutbridge cast from material he recorded off air. He forwards transmission details and recordings to share with all of us. Paul Dunne unearthed some cuttings featuring Lovable Leslie. Michael Yates has been looking at Jane's Fighting Ships from the early Navy Lark days and sent us some marvellous adverts from companies associated with marine engineering. Do look out for one from a company called Phillips; they specialise in navigation equipment..... Stephen Griffith has been mining the archives once again and has provided us with a unique record of Jon Pertwee's early radio performances. This is the first time this information has been printed anywhere and we are truly indebted to Stephen for his continuing efforts. Thanks to Richard Broad for his endeavours and cuttings on Jon Pertwee. Lynne Porter has been tireless in the pursuit of a small publication (Sheet music for the Navy Lark movie). This hugely difficult to find memento of the film was mentioned by Lynne to Roy Hudd who agreed to use his contacts to possibly find a copy. Sadly though, Roy Hudd's unique network was unable to locate the elusive sheet music. The search continues. And finally, thanks to Mick Jeffs, whose personal archive and reminiscences of his former days aboard ship he shares with us in this edition.

Graeme Stevenson of ORCA was privileged to get into the BBC sound archives this year and was played a recording of Alastair Scott Johnston talking to the audience before the very first episode of the Navy Lark. Let's hope that BBC Worldwide can put that material onto CD in a future box set as part of their "adding value" precept.

Those of you hoping to see details of the Navy Lark film special publication promised for this Summer will be sorry to learn that it has been temporarily shelved as a magazine. The reason is financial. We simply have to keep

within a budget: as and when merchandise sells, we can introduce further lines!

I have had preliminary exchanges with BBC Worldwide regarding next year's cassette/CD release Navy Lark 17.

I felt it would be fun if the issue featured some of Ronnie Barker's fine performances as Engineer Queeg. The idea has gone down well and with luck this could be the focus of the next box set! I'm sure we all have our favourite shows; if you have time, drop the Wardroom a line and tell us which is your most memorable.

Interesting to note that despite a huge budget, good advertising, a Radio Times special feature, a report in "Navy News" and a proven formula for ship board storylines in the Royal Navy, ITV pulled "Making Waves"- a fictional account of seafarers aboard HMS Suffolk- part way through its first series. Poor viewing figures was the reason given. Oh, if ITV had only kept those episodes of HMS Paradise with Frank Thornton and Richard Caldicot. Clive Dunn and Priscilla Morgan. Buried in this edition is a column from the Senior Service's own newspaper "Navy News" about this short run show. The article was originally in the young readers section.

Christmas normally brings a spate of re-released material for impulse buying. On my shopping list are two DVDs from a company called "DD Home Entertainment" Tel: 0845 122 0318. They are offering Peter Sellers and David Tomlinson in "Up the Creek" and "Further up the Creek" with Frankie Howerd for £15.98. Many of you will have access to shops where you might source these movies still cheaper. Unfortunately in the wilds of Suffolk, choice is very limited.

Ronnie Barker has a splendid photographic autobiography out. A huge undertaking, sifting and choosing images for publication. From these labours we get the chance to watch a young actor grow; a radio star emerge; a satirist develop and a television phenomenon evolve across a variety of genres. Published at £18.99 Radio Times is offering a post free option of purchasing the tome for £16.99 Tel:0870 770 7979

Our original intention for this edition was to produce a "Readers Write" issue but with limited incoming mail over the Summer we have used our archive a little more.

Evelyn Wells (Alastair's assistant) has sent us a magnificent amount of historical material and this will be serialised as from the New Year We will feature some never seen before pictures of the cast in rehearsal and getting ready for a BBC photo shoot.

Visitors to Ebay will have noted the proliferation of people selling Navy Lark material in MP3 format. Some vendors explain to prospective purchasers the legality of such a purchase but the majority are not even aware of what they are selling and put up messages saying that they don't know much about the show. Enquiries to one vendor failed to elicit any response. The vendor had used the South African cast photo from the Springbok radio site. (see page 12) Knowing that this material is all but impossible to get from the person who has a Springbok archive I was curious to see if this was an avenue to those shows. No reply ever came and the enigma remains... Should the BBC try and put an end to this breach of copyright? Do we believe in public domain material? Let us know.

BBC7 is keeping The Navy Lark on its schedules and adding some other wonderful material to its programming. Keen listeners have begun to highlight occasional alternative opening lines. If you can get BBC7 and listen to The Navy Lark do drop us a line whenever you hear a different intro speech. It would be useful to produce a 2nd list for our members' booklet with all those alternative announcements recorded.

Do you have access to earlier copies of Spotlight or Who's Who in the Theatre? If they are gathering dust and you can face getting them in the post to the Wardroom it would be very much appreciated. The NLAS is really struggling to find biographical details on many of the Lark casts from the movie and sister shows. HELP!

Elvie Hall has made a couple of movies but we really have no real information. Likewise Pamela Buck, June Tobin, Jan Waters, Greta Gourieta and a host of people who made the various larks so delightful. The web can generate limited details on occasions but we would like to have access to much more information on our marvellous actors.

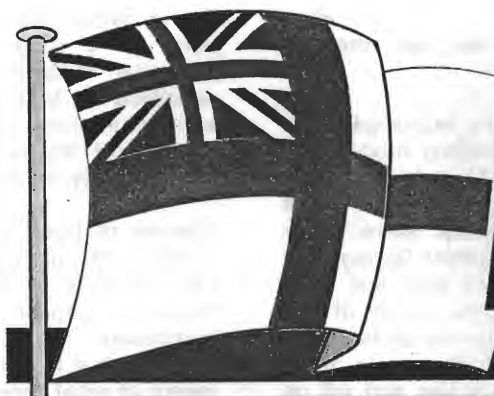
#### ◆ Screen and radio star Leslie Phillips says:

"I'm a keen do-it-yourself man, and when I was transforming my London home I used to rummage among the apparent rubbish that other people had thrown out of their house in their attempts to 'modernise'.

"So I reckon that one of the best things about this country are the skips in the streets - I've found many a bargain. It seems it's the British character to have an eye for a bargain!







# Navy

[www.navynews.co.uk](http://www.navynews.co.uk)

## 'Left hand down a k

YOUR Young Readers' Club item on *The Navy Lark* whisked me back to the bridge of HMS Troubridge one dogwatch in 1965, when while rounding the North Foreland both our compasses briefly 'fell over'.

The wheelhouse being below the upper deck, without a compass the helmsman had nothing to aim at (whereas I could of course see the N. Goodwin light vessel, for which we were steering at the time).

I wonder if any other OOW found himself presented with such an opportunity to order "left hand down a bit"?

The association between HMS Troubridge and Troutbridge unsurprisingly spanned several commissions. During mine we went to the Playhouse and they visited us in Portsmouth – the POMEs' mess especially offering inspiration to the scriptwriters! One notes that they survive on Radio7! – B. Austin, Chippenham



● Right: Navy Lark star Jon Pertwee oversees the rum issue during a visit to HMS Troubridge (above) in London in 1969.

An outstanding character actor, Pertwee, who died in 1996, achieved his greatest popular success as the third incarnation – and some would say the best – of TV Time Lord Dr Who (1970-74). He served in the Royal Navy in World War II. Removed from HMS Hood for officer training just before she departed to join the hunt for the Bismarck, he had a number of other lucky escapes. Shortly after, as he arrived at Portsmouth to begin his officer candidate's course, he was blown up in an air raid and, having been given up for dead, came to on a makeshift mortuary slab.

The Navy Lark's phenomenal 18-year run on BBC radio is unique – "no other radio comedy series remotely like it has ever run so long" as Pertwee's biographer Bernard Bale has noted. Ronnie Barker, June Whitfield and Leslie Phillips were among its several luminaries.

Somewhat uncomfortably for the Senior Service, as Bale also observes: "Part of the reason for its success was that everything remained plausible, no matter how outrageous . . . As well as drawing on Jon's experience and taking advice from the Admiralty, there was another element of authenticity involved in *The Navy Lark*. HMS Troutbridge was based on HMS Troubridge, the Captain of which was James Pertwee, cousin of Jon and son of Uncle Guy Pertwee, who had done his best to provide home comforts for Jon during his early days in the Royal Navy.

"Jon regularly received bulletins about the exploits of the Troubridge crews and in particular the endless supply of excuses for late return from leave and other misdemeanours. This fodder was fed to (writer) Lawrie Wyman and turned into script gems for the show."



We are pleased to be able to share these new pictures of Jon and Leslie with Navy Lark enthusiasts. The original photographs were taken by the Senior Service and are currently held on file at Navy News HQ in Pompey.

It is evident that our two actors turned up minus costume for a day on board ship sometime/somewhere! They must have been hastily given the uniforms for the photo-shoot. The journalist writing the piece for Young Readers' Club correctly identifies JP's jacket as that of a commander's. Caps with oak leaf decoration on the peak are also worn by a commander; however, Mr Pertwee never rose above the rank of a Chief Petty Officer and was not entitled to wear either of those garments! Sub. Lt. Phillips is entitled to wear a cap with an anchor surrounded by oak leaves and a jacket with a single hoop on the arm. (The full picture is available on page 7) The 'Navy News' answer to the quiz was "They are wearing each other's caps". We ought to add that one of the characters (JP) is in the wrong uniform entirely!

*Possible exceptions:* Jon Pertwee\* playing Commander Fairbody or Commander Wetherby, but these characters would not normally be seen with Sub Lt Phillips!

# News

APRIL 2004 £1.20



## LEFT A BIT, RIGHT A BIT!

**MAKING Waves**, the new Navy drama series soon to appear on ITV, is the first for over 30 years!

The last one was *Warship* in the 1970s.

On BBC radio, though, *The Navy Lark* was one of the biggest comedy hits ever, running for over 18 years from 1959-77.

It was set on board 'HMS Troutbridge' and in 1969 when the real-life Type 15 anti-submarine frigate HMS Troutbridge - then also the RN's oldest seagoing warship with 27 years' service - paid her last visit to London, Navy Lark's star actors were invited on board.

Navigating Officer Leslie Phillips - he's the one on the right - famously didn't know port from starboard ('left a bit, right a bit' he would say).

Jon Pertwee (the one on the left) was later even more famous on TV as Dr Who and Worzel Gummidge, while Leslie Phillips moved away from comedy (the 'Carry On' and 'Doctor' films) to top-rated serious character roles (*Out of Africa*, *Empire of the Sun* and *Scandal*).

You can still listen to *The Navy Lark* on BBC tapes - and they're just as funny today.

Meanwhile, ask your Dad what's wrong with this picture of the two stars clowning it up over the bridge wing compass.

Here's a clue - Pertwee (left) is a commander, Phillips (right) is a humble sub-lieutenant.



YOUNG READERS CLUB

dit'







Sir,

The Navy Lark article (Autumn 2003) revived happy memories. I was aboard H.M.S. Troubridge in the spring of 1959 when, as Portsmouth naval base duty visit ship, we hosted the BBC team who came to look into the possibilities of a naval sitcom. That day Troubridge became Troutbridge and a smash hit was born. By the time we returned from the West Indies in June 1960 The Navy Lark had become radio's top sit-com.

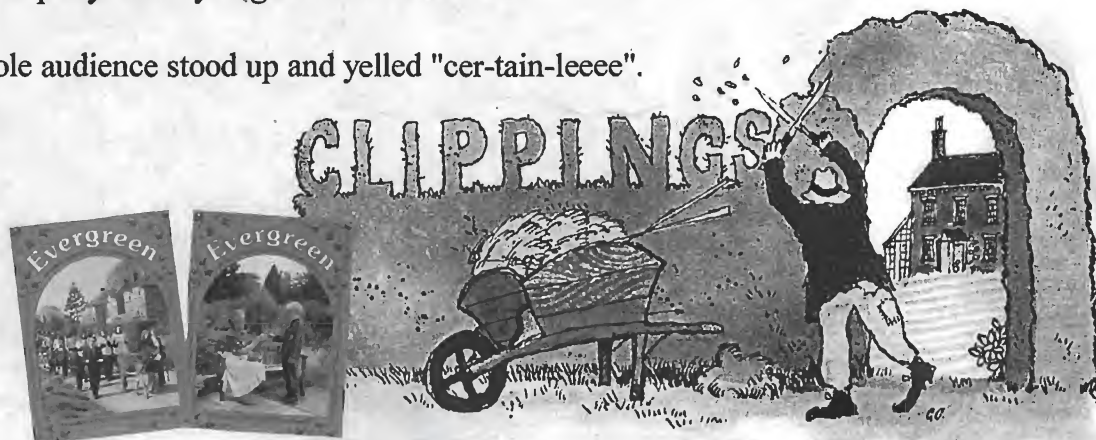
The Troubridge's 'ship's character' was a very senior able seaman, Ned Sparkes, who ran the laundry and was always very obliging. If ever you needed a pair of shorts washed and ironed quickly, just ask Ned and he would always say "cer-tain-leeee" in a long drawn out way which became the lower deck catch phrase whenever a favour was asked.

On our return to UK the BBC invited the crew to a recording and after-show party at their Paris Theatre Studio in London. Suffice to say it was a difficult evening for producer and cast playing to a bunch of, shall we say, 'merry' matelots and the half-hour show took twice the normal time to record. Eventually it was all but in the bag except for the closing credits which the announcer continually failed to complete because of the noisy audience. The producer then came on stage and said "Lads, give us a break. We've just got this last bit to do then we can wrap up and get on with party. Will you give us a bit of hush?"

And in unison the whole audience stood up and yelled "cer-tain-leeee".

Yours faithfully

M.J. Jeffs







Dear Fred,

*It's me again.*



I was going through some old navy days mementos yesterday and came across the enclosed. You've probably seen the Troubridge one (Daily Mirror I think but don't know the date) but I thought you might also be interested in the Jon Pertwee pics that were taken when Jon, Bill Maynard, Mary Priestman and Lisbeth Lennon did a show aboard H.M.S. Birmingham in Hong Kong in 1954/5 (not sure of the exact date.).

I hope they might be of some use.

Best regards

Wick Feld

Mick Jeffs



MRB HOOD  
JON'S MUCH LAMENTED SHIP





With PERTISSEN NAVY NEWS



**JON PERTWEE: RADIO VARIETY APPEARANCES FOR MIDDAY MUSIC HALL & WORKERS' PLAYTIME**

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC London Home Service, tx. 10 Apr 1953: variety show. *Top of the Bill.*). p. Trafford Whitelock.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC London Home Service, tx. 29 May 1953: variety show. *Top of the Bill.*). p. Trafford Whitelock.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Home Service, tx. 5 Jun 1953: variety show. *Resident Top of the Bill.*). p. Trafford Whitelock.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Home Service, tx. 19 Jun 1953: variety show. *Resident Top of the Bill.*). p. Trafford Whitelock.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Home Service, tx. 12 Oct 1953: variety show. *Resident Top of the Bill.*). p. Trafford Whitelock.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC London Home Service, tx. 9 May 1954: variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*).

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Home Service, tx. 9 Oct 1954: variety show. *Top of the Bill.*). p. John Simmonds.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Home Service, tx. 31 Jan 1955: variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Jacques Brown.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC London Home Service, tx. 18 Nov 1955: variety show. *In Town Today.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Home Service, tx. 13 Jan 1956: variety show. *In Town Today.*) p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Home Service, tx. 16 Apr 1956: variety show. *Guest.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Home Service, tx. 30 Jul 1956: variety show. *Guest.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Home Service, tx. 28 Sep 1956: variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Home Service, tx. 5 Nov 1956: variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Home Service, tx. 7 Jan 1957: variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Home Service, tx. 13 May 1957: variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Home Service, tx. 9 Sep 1957: variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 20 Jan 1958: variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 28 Feb 1958: variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 9 May 1958: variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 22 Aug 1958: variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 5 Dec 1958: variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 9 Jan 1959: variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 9 Feb 1959: variety show from Coventry Theatre. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. James Pestridge.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 6 Mar 1959: variety show. *Variety Act Performance Guest.*). p. Bill Worsley.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 9 Oct 1959: variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. John Simmonds.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 22 Jan 1960: variety show. *Variety Act Performance Guest.*). p. Bill Gates.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 14 Oct 1960: variety show. *Variety Act Performance Guest.*). p. Bill Gates.



**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 20 Jan 1961: variety show. *Variety Act Performance Guest.*). p. Bill Gates.

**MIDDAY MUSIC-HALL** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 13 Nov 1961: variety show. *Variety Act Performance Guest.*). p. Bill Gates.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Home Service, tx. 12 Aug 1954: factory canteen variety show from Broughton. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Alun Williams.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Home Service, tx. 23 Sep 1954: factory canteen variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*).

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Home Service, tx. 15 Feb 1955: factory canteen variety show from Amersham. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Gates.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Home Service, tx. 20 Oct 1955: factory canteen variety show from a shoe manufacturers in Northampton. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. James Pestridge.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Home Service, tx. 7 Jun 1956: factory canteen variety show from Plymouth. *Variety Act Performance.*).

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Home Service, tx. 16 Aug 1956: factory canteen variety show from Rugby. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. James Pestridge.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Home Service, tx. 18 Sep 1956: factory canteen variety show from Strood, Kent. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Gates.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 25 Oct 1956: factory canteen variety show from Stalybridge. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. James Casey.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 20 Dec 1956: factory canteen variety show from Bedlington. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. James Casey.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Home Service, tx. 18 Jun 1957: factory canteen variety show from Wembley. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Gates.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Home Service, tx. 26 Sep 1957: factory canteen variety show from Engineering Works, Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Richard Maddock.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 10 Oct 1957: factory canteen variety show from Bristol. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Brian Patten.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 9 Dec 1958: factory canteen variety show from Malmesbury, Wiltshire. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Brian Patten.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 24 Feb 1959: factory canteen variety show from telephone cable factory in Dagenham, Essex. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Bill Gates.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 2 Jul 1959: factory canteen variety show from engineering factory in Daventry. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. James Pestridge.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 14 Jan 1960: factory canteen variety show from Manchester. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Geoff Lawrence.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 9 Feb 1960: factory canteen variety show from a clothing factory, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. James Pestridge.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 16 Jun 1960: factory canteen variety show from a kitchenware manufacturers, Stourbridge. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. James Pestridge.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 2 Oct 1960: factory canteen variety show. *Variety Act Performance.*).

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 22 Nov 1960: hosiery factory canteen variety show from Basford, Nottingham. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. James Pestridge.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 26 Oct 1961: factory canteen variety show from Central Electricity Board Generating Station, Drakelow, Burton-on-Trent. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. James Pestridge.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 4 Jan 1962: factory canteen variety show from Shoe Factory, Street, Somerset. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. Brian Patten.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 16 Jan 1962: factory canteen variety show from a foundry, Tipton, Staffordshire. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. James Pestridge.

**WORKERS' PLAYTIME** (BBC Light Programme, tx. 23 May 1963: variety from a factory in Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire. *Variety Act Performance.*). p. James Casey.

STEPHEN GRIFFITHS



# ALL ABOARD HMS LAUGHTER



Margaret Milner-Smythe, the other  
When appearing regularly in the series.



David Horner, who plays the part  
Number 1



Tony Meehan Jeremy Tanner



Tom Meehan, the producer of "The  
Navy Lark", who also plays the part  
of the fishing fanatic, Commander  
Stanton.



Harold Friend, who is the long-suffer-  
ing Captain Porey.



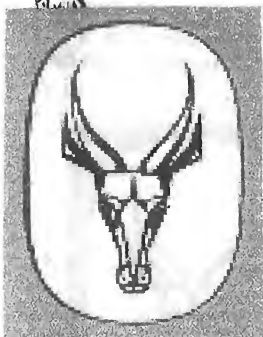
Brian Squires, who plays Sub-Lieuten-  
ant Fanshawe.



Tommy Read, who plays the part of  
Leading Seaman "Taffy" Evans.



Maureen Adair



WHICH is the most durable ship  
afloat? Listeners to The Navy  
Lark will have no hesitation in  
replying for H. M. S. Troutbridge, the  
frigate which brings something or is  
herself pranged at least once between  
7 and 7.30 every Sunday evening on  
Springbok Radio.

The roar of laughter which greets  
this stock opening to the show opens  
the floodgates to one of the happiest  
half hours of the week, a time in  
which the cast obviously enjoys itself  
as much as the audience. South Afri-  
cans can then laugh at the wits of The  
Navy Lark and follow the nautical  
adventures of Chief Petty Officer Per-  
kins and Able Seaman and Frank  
(played by John Simpson and Frank  
Graham), and Number 1 (David Har-  
ner) and his "left hand down a bit"  
colleague, Sub-Lieutenant Fanshawe  
(Brian Squires). The man in the  
middle is long-suffering Captain Porey  
(Harold Friend).

The show "admittedly bears very  
little relation to actual life in the  
Royal Navy, but ex-RN members are  
among its keenest fans. A few weeks

ago a special recording session was  
organised for the Royal Navy Associ-  
ation in Durban, and they showed  
their appreciation by making the pro-  
ducer, Tom Meehan, an honorary  
member of their association at a  
presentation after the show.

Tom Meehan also makes fleeting  
appearances in The Navy Lark as the  
fishing fanatic, Commander Stanton.  
Others who contribute to the fun are  
The Admiral (Reg Richards), Able  
Seaman "Ginger" Nutt (David Cook-  
bear), the Wrens (Maureen Adair and  
Margaret Milner-Smythe) and Leading  
Seaman "Taffy" Evans (Tom Read).  
When not on duty as Headbar, Ma-  
ureen Adair also doubles as Mrs Porey.  
Lawrie Wyman, the British night-  
creator for Troutbridge hanging above  
his desk. It shows the dockyard gater  
crumbling under Troutbridge's "an-  
slaught, and underneath is CPO Per-  
kins's now well-known shout, "Every-  
body Down!"

\* The Navy Lark, Sundays at 7 pm  
on Springbok Radio





"That'll do from you, Falso!" CPO Perkins (John Simpson) mills rank on Able Seaman Johnson (Frank Graham) in a typical scene from "The Navy Lark".

Then Heather Hardie (Maureen Adair) tries hard to communicate with The Admiral (Reginald Richard). These are two of the characters heard regularly in the popular "Navy Lark".

Springbok Radio was set up in 1950 and remained in service until it was closed on December 31, 1985. The station maintained studios in Cape Town and Durban. It was the Durban Studio that came to specialise in British material due to the energies of Tom Meehan, John Simpson, Roger Service, Tommy Reed, Frank Graham, Maureen Adair and Brian Squires. Recreating shows like *The Men From The Ministry*, *Father, Dear Father*, *The Navy Lark* and *Friends & Neighbours* made South Africa laugh. Springbok was a commercial station; its financial security depended on advertisements which meant that it was unable to re-broadcast BBC material. BBC policy prevented transcription copies of UK transmissions being used by non public service stations. Just one *Navy Lark* show from South Africa is freely available outside the continent and the edited broadcast makes fleeting reference to the fact that Lawrie Wyman originally wrote the show. However Old Time Radio Collectors do have access to *The Men From The Ministry* material recorded in Springbok studios. These shows are virtually identical to the UK broadcasts but scripting credits are given to a cast member of Springbok Radio. The recreation of these shows virtually word perfect but with apposite editing to accommodate commercials, gave the South African audiences a taste of British light entertainment but, strangely, included geographical references that few South African listeners could have any idea about or understand their peculiar significance.

It is understood that around 10 or so Springbok *Navy Lark* shows exist in a private collector's archive. The show which we have can be borrowed from Iden. It is currently unavailable from the Pumamouse Web-site where it once languished. The cuttings and images on these pages are still available at Pumamouse, but the material John Simpson, one of the show's cast, emailed me 2 years ago has yet to arrive. The data became corrupted on its journey and all that floated in was raw code. Further efforts to learn more about this other series will be made in due course. But if you look at the MP3 disc artwork and the box design put together by "davidonnow" for his Ebay sales you can see that he has no idea about the material he is selling, because it has the South African Cast British UK artwork and Pumamouse cuttings. The disc has NO South African shows.





## SOUND BITES

### Hitchhiker returns

Twenty-five years after the original radio series, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* returns to Radio 4 in September. The original radio cast are back for this dramatisation of the last three books, beginning with *Life, the Universe and Everything*. The big change is that William Franklyn replaces his friend the late Peter Jones as the Voice of the Book, and there are cameos from Joanna Lumley (above), Leslie Phillips and cricket commentator Henry Blofeld.



RADIO TIMES



## Navy Lark Collection

MP3



Margaret Minner-Smith, the other Vera appearing regularly in the series.



Tom Meekins, the producer of 'The Navy Lark' who also plays the part of the fishing fanatic, Commander Stanton.



Brian Squire, who plays Sub-Inspector and Partridge.



David Horner, who plays the part of 'Nutmeg'.



Harold Peart, who is the long-suffering Captain Peart.



Tommy Head who plays the part of Leading Seaman 'Taffy' Brown.

2  
DISK

Collection 164 Shows MP3



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NEW!

### UP THE CREEK

The laughs come thick and fast in this classic Peter Sellers comedy romp. When bumbling Lieutenant Humphrey Fairweather (David Tomlinson) is put in charge of the mothballed destroyer HMS Berkeley, it threatens to ruin everything for Chief Petty Officer Docherty (Peter Sellers) and the crew. They've

converted the destroyer into a highly profitable farm, laundry and bakery and are now making a fortune selling off excess naval rations and supplies to the local village! Cert U. Video 1 hr 20 mins. DVD 1 hr 28 mins.



NEW!

### FURTHER UP THE CREEK

The Navy has sold its obsolete Frigate HMS Aristotle to the Arab nation of Algerrocco. Its crooked crew, led by Bosun Dibble (Frankie Howerd) decide to make some cash by pretending the ship is really a luxury cruise liner and selling tickets for the final voyage! Trust Captain Humphrey Fairweather

RN (David Tomlinson) to get himself posted to the ship. Can the crew keep him away from the passengers? Cert U. Video 1 hr 28 mins. DVD 1 hr 36 mins.



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# BEHIND THE SCENES

television from the inside out

Could this make-up artist be covering up some old battle scars? It seems a fair bet, as sailor at the receiving end of the sh is actor Alex Ferns, familiar to audience fans as evil Trevor, who his contemporaries courtesy of sumping blow to the head from iron-wielding wife, Little Mo. His latest outing Ferns is steering sure through slightly less rpy waters, playing a Royal cy commander in a part ITV1 drama *Waves* (think *afraid version of Trier, Soldier*). Vincent Ferns at y in Portsmouth as fictional HMS *fulk* he's in charge of

guys are saying, 'He wouldn't do that. She wouldn't do that.' The saluting has been hilarious. We don't know when to salute, who to salute or how to salute. Hence the trouble with *Procedure Alpha*. Three months together has also bred some wry humour. The seamen obviously watch *EastEnders*, 'I've had so many iron jokes from the crew it's unbelievable,' says Ferns. 'It's always the iron.' Ferns's real-life counterpart, Cdr Richard Thomas, has found the experience equally entertaining: 'A bit of stardom never goes amiss.' The film crew have been working hard to get me into the scenes: I've

## FACT FILE

WHAT IS IT? *Making Waves*  
WHO'S IN IT? Alex Ferns  
WHEN'S IT ON? Wednesday 11

been fighting a rearguard action to avoid it, but there is one scene I appear in - in disguise.'

The Navy hopes *Making Waves* will attract new recruits, but it doesn't look as if the traffic will be two-way. The *Crafton* crew wasn't exactly overjoyed with the glamour of television. 'Initially, they were falling over each other to be extras,' says Cdr Thomas, 'but when they realised it was 12 hours of standing around, the interest waned!' Benji Wilson

## HITTING THE DECK

Can you tell the crew members from the set, or crew member? Main picture: Alex Ferns with make-up artist Tami Lee. From near right: Ferns with real-life Lt Cdr Donald Whitby; stewardess Lee Jones snaps Ferns and co-star Stephen Kennedy; the TV crew with actors Lee Boardman and Paul Chequer; actress Emily Hamilton

# SALTED!

The ablest seamen who ever sailed the seven seas have been the creations of TV. So to celebrate the briny Bank Holiday festival, let's go a rovin' o'er a log of captains courageous

## ▲ CAPTAIN BIRDS EYE (1967)

Canadian actor John Hower was the original Captain, but the old sea dog was dropped from the fish fingers campaign in 1971, earning an obituary in *The Times*. He rose again in 1974

## ▲ JAMES ONEDIN (1971)

Set in the 19th century, *The Onedin Line* starred Peter Gilmore with Howard Lang as the salty Cap'n Balnes at the helm of *Charlotta Rhodes*. The BBC provided buckets for seasick actors

## ▶ TOM HOWARD (1985)

Set among the Hampshire yachting fraternity, BBC's *Howards' Way* was the British *Dynasty*. Everyone had an affair with everyone else and took it in turns to own Relton Marine

## ▲ PARA HANDY (1959)

The first adaptation starred Duncan Macrae as skipper of *Vital Spark*, a Scottish cargo boat. Later Paras were Roddy McMillan and Gregor Fisher (left)

## ▶ SIR FRANCIS DRAKE (1961)

Terence Morgan (right) led the *Golden Hind* against the Armada in this costume adventure. John Thaw played Drake in the 1980 TV film

## ▲ POPEYE (1958)

The sailor man who single-handedly boosted the popularity of spinach - and all for the love of Olive Oyl, the world's first supermodel. May Questel, who did the voice of Olive, sometimes doubled up as Popeye!

## ▶ DAN TEMPEST (1956)

When *Jaws* was still a tiddler, Robert Shaw starred as the ex-irate in *The Buccaneers*. Plenty of swash and buckle

## ▲ ROBBIE COLTRANE (1997)

Yo-ho-ho and a few bottles of rum. Drunken shrink turns drunken skipper in a film of R L Stevenson's 18th-century tale *Ebb Tide*, due on ITV next year. And keep a weather eye out for *Hornblower* - also on the horizon

## ▶ TROY TEMPEST (1965)

No relation to Dan (see below), the hero of *Stingray* was a 21st-century submarine captain who battled with evil Aquaphilans and flirted with a mermaid

## ▲ WARSHIP (1973)

The crew of the frigate HMS *Hero* set sail for five years of naval adventures with a cast including Bryan Marshall (left) and David Savile. The Navy kindly supplied the BBC with a real warship

## ▶ TRIANGLE (1981)

Michael Craig (right) and Larry Lamb performed heroically in BBC1's saga of love on a North Sea ferry. Even with Kate O'Mara as the ship's siren, *Triangle* soon sank

## ▲ CAPTAIN PUGWASH (1957)

Master of the *Black Pig*, the illy-livered Pugwash was invariably rescued from the clutches of his arch foe Cut Throat Jake by Tom, the ship's resourceful cabin boy

## ▼ LORD NELSON (1982)

Kenneth Colley starred in the four-parter, *I Remember Nelson*. But Nelson's finest hour, the final episode, was postponed for six months because of the Falklands crisis

RadioTimes 25-31 MAY 1996

## Loose Ends

A miscellany of cuttings from The Radio Times along with new discs and tape just arrived in the Wardroom.

The Radio Times "Salted" article selects landmark programmes which connect to the sea. *HMS Paradise* is missing; do drop us a line if your memory recalls other oversights.

The Mythmakers DVD with Jon Pertwee eventually arrived from Reeltime. Copies are perhaps best purchased through alternative outlets. "Pertwee in Person" has been around since 1990 and we have just put a copy in our library. Leslie Phillips makes an appearance in a new Dr Who story "Medicinal Purposes" (tel: 01628 829140 to place an order.) The Pinewood Studio CD with Leslie was a tie in with the Carry On team's convention back in 2000. It was a small production run interview disc. We have put a copy in the sound archive (contact Iden Adams)

## AND FINALLY,

the Phillips navigation advert.....

Meet the Stars From the World of BBCtv's DOCTOR WHO



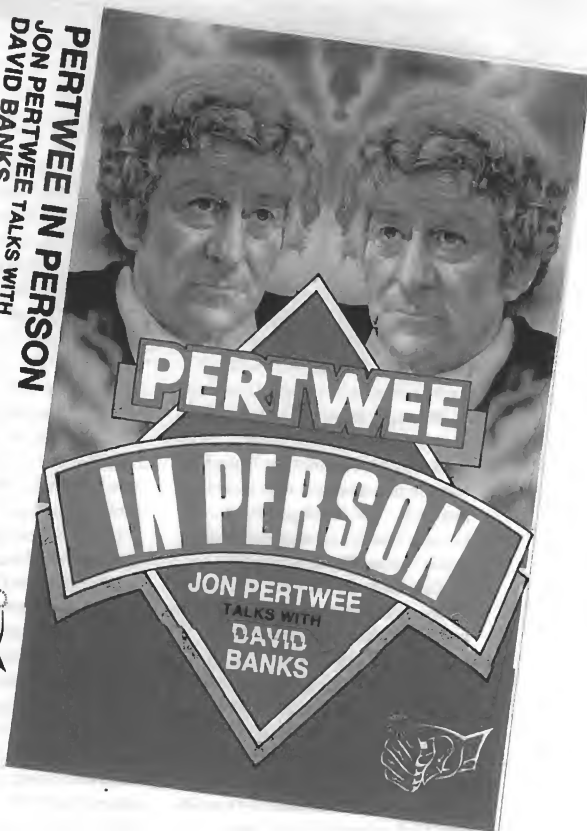
"The saluting has been hilarious. We don't know when to salute, who to salute to or how to salute"

# Getting shipshape

IT'S ANCHORS AWEIGH FOR THE LAUNCH OF ITV'S NEW DRAMA

**PERTWEE IN PERSON**  
JON PERTWEE TALKS WITH  
DAVID BANKS

SILVER FIRST



In Conversation with  
**LESLIE PHILLIPS OBE**



Recorded at Pinewood Studios

COLIN BAKER IN  
**DOCTOR WHO**

**MEDICINAL PURPOSES**

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## BEST OF TIMES WORST OF TIMES

MIRIAM MARGOLYES, 61, has acted in many television dramas, plays and films, such as *The Age of Innocence*, and can be seen in the new *Harry Potter* film this autumn. She recalls the day her mother suffered a stroke — and the profound effect it had on her life. By Ann McFerran. Photographs: Mark Guthrie

My parents had me late in life, after 11 years of marriage, when my mother was 37. She'd been frightened of having children — her cousin had died in childbirth, as had her cousin's child. I was told I was conceived in an air raid in 1940 while they were living in Plaistow. Their house was bombed, so they went to Oxford, where they stayed and were very happy together.

We were a very tight threesome, a fortress family. Daddy worked feverishly hard as a doctor. Mummy was a businesswoman who went into property — and thank goodness, because Daddy certainly didn't make much money. She let rooms to Oxford students like the Hon Jacob Rothschild, Ken Loach, Ferdy Mount and Tariq Ali. Mummy and I were ferociously close. She was a deeply social person and a generous host. She was always cooking and it was a wonderful atmosphere to grow up in.

Mummy was also fat, overactive, rather neurotic and hysterical by nature, a prime candidate for a stroke. She'd left school at 14 and was a tremendous social climber. When I applied for Cambridge she had this brilliant idea of getting Isaiah Berlin to be my sponsor — my father was his

told Mummy what I was thinking of doing. Three days after that, she had a stroke. I don't think the two were unrelated! She was only 63, two years older than me now.

I rushed to the hospital in Oxford to be with her, where I heard the consultant saying to his houseman: "I'm too busy to do this case; you take it." I should have said: "No, you take this case; you have the ability to help her." But I didn't. The houseman decided on a powerful medication to lower her blood pressure. She didn't want to take it, so they made me persuade her. I sat with Mummy all night, begging her, and finally she took it. But shortly afterwards she had a second, more paralyzing stroke.

For seven years, Mummy couldn't speak properly or move. She was dependent on my father, who was utterly devoted, and a succession of helpers. And the friends who used to come to our house to be fed and entertained all fell away. It's

Towards the end she would growl with ferocity: "Get married!" Of course, I didn't

parents' doctor. She didn't read but she was shrewd; she knew he was an important intellectual. Having him as your sponsor was like saying Einstein was your sponsor. He came to supper once and was very charming.

I think Mummy had wanted to be an actress, but it was not the thing for a Jewish middle-class woman with her background. When I became keen on acting, she saw I could have what she never had, so she took me to elocution lessons and entered me for festivals.

By 1968 I was rehearsing *The Ha-Ha* for the director Richard Eyre at Hampstead Theatre Club. I hadn't slept with a man, and I felt that I should have some sexual experience. I

unpleasant dealing with long-term illness, and my mother was probably quite smelly and crazy, but I've been public in my scorn for Oxford and its society ever since. I have little patience for those who accepted my parents' hospitality and then stayed away. Nothing will ever match the horror of those years of watching my mother die.

There's never a good time for something like this to happen. Daddy was quite mean with money and

he wouldn't pay someone to clean the house, so I did it, and sometimes friends came to help me. Gradually, however, the house became terrible. Nobody wanted to come there and nobody did, except for me and Daddy. Every week I drove down to Oxford to do the shopping and to wash her. She wouldn't let anyone else do that.

There were terrible moments. One day I drove her shopping to Fine Fare in Summertown. She'd plod along next to me, then sit on a sort of three-legged walking stick. I told her: "I'm just going to fetch something. I'll be back in a second." She must have seen a pot of jam on a shelf, which released the word in her brain. She bellowed "Jaaamm!" in a ferociously loud wail.

The whole shop stopped, I came running and she started to cry. I think that was the worst moment — partly because it was so public.

My parents were good people. My mother, though sometimes wilful, was a good woman, and my father an angel who spent his life in the service of others. They should have been having a lovely time, but this malign fate took it away. Then again, Mummy shouldn't have eaten so much. She was greedy with food and didn't exercise enough.

There is nothing more terrible than chronic illness, because the only end is death. But terrible though it was — and I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy — my mother's slow, painful dying gave me a depth and a compassion that I wouldn't otherwise have had.

Towards the end, she would grip my hand and growl with an insane ferocity: "Get married!" Of course, I didn't. Now I'd say: "I'm not getting married, but I'm going to mix in important circles and be well regarded by my peers." That she'd have loved.

Six months before she died, when my father was nearly 80, my mother was so noisy and difficult she had to be put into a mental hospital — a dreadful old place in Oxford. I was at an Equity meeting when she died, and my friend Heather had the unpleasant task of saying: "There's some very sad news for you..." But, actually, her death was a tremendous relief.

After she died, I couldn't talk to my father about Mummy. She filled the landscape; she was the centre of our lives. Not long after, Daddy came to live with me in London. I was a good daughter, and that gives me a lot of pleasure. But I don't revisit easily those terrible years of my mother's dying ■

Miriam Margolyes appeared in the *Navy Lark* in August 1975. She was Gloria, a daughter of the island chief. Sub Lt. Phillips, having landed on the island after running Troutbridge aground, finds himself immediately betrothed to Gloria when Grandma Pertwee (the island's matriarchal chieftain) decides that Mr Phillips is an ideal catch.

The Society has been in touch with Miriam to learn a little more about the broadcast. We have forwarded a copy of the show and await her response to this one off appearance.



ARTICLE: SUNDAY TIMES  
MAGAZINE  
5 AUGUST 02



# One final question...

Sit down, settle back and be seduced as the nation's favourite smoothie celebrates 70 years in showbiz

**Well, hello ...**  
Helloooo.

**Sorry, just had to get that out of the way. Oh I Say is a celebration of your 80th birthday and an incredible 70 years in the business – how did you start out?**

I used to do all the school plays – I was awful but my mother made me. My first paid role was in *Peter Pan* at the Palladium. I was 11 and I played a wolf, and got paid 25 shillings for that job.

**You grew up in the East End – how come you sound so posh?**

I grew up with a cockney accent, but in those days you had to get rid of it. If you dropped an aitch, say, it would be viewed as a serious mistake.

**How odd – because one of the things you're best known for now is your voice.**

Yes. It was a mixture of who I worked with and four years as an Army officer during the war. The voice has opened a lot of doors for me, like being in *Harry Potter*.

**Yes, you play the Sorting Hat. How did you react when someone asked you to play a hat?**

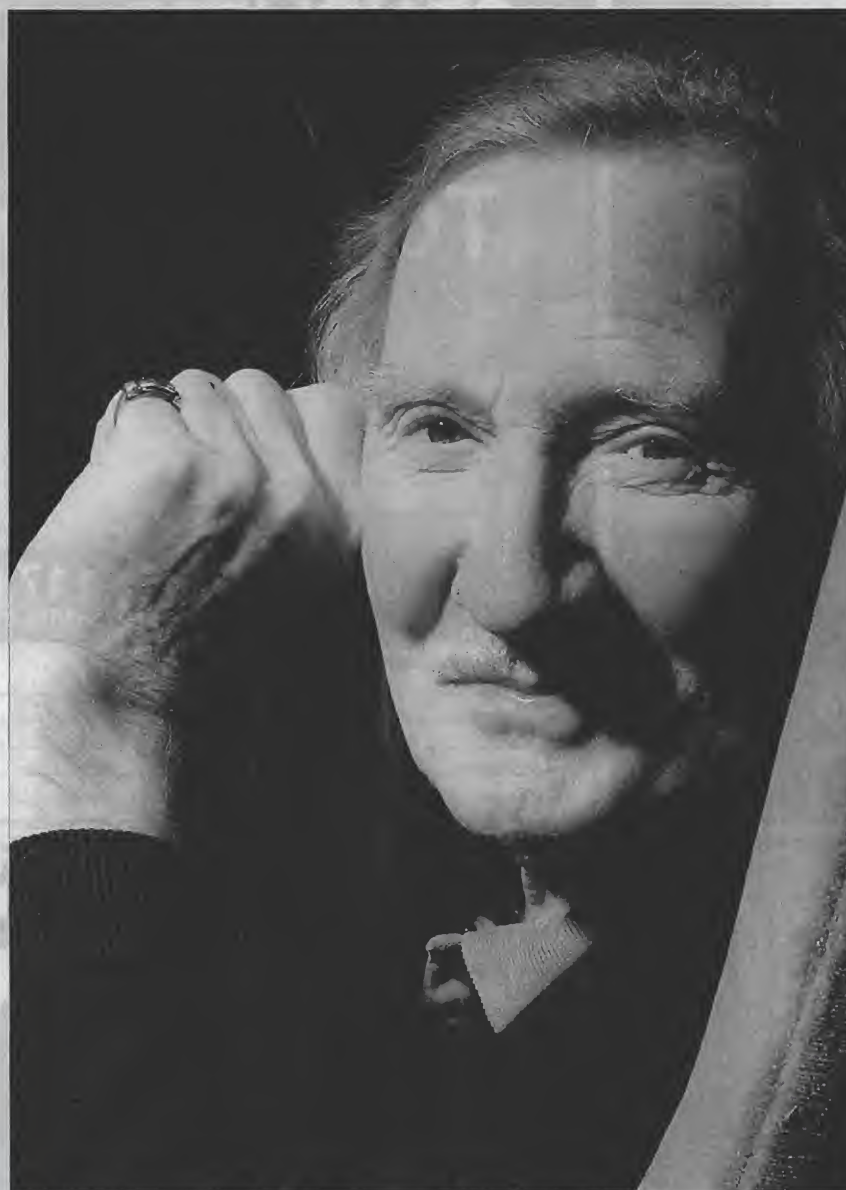
I hadn't read the books when I was asked. I bought the books for my grandchildren – I've got a lot of them – and then I had to get them back off them for me.

**Your on-screen image is as a ladies man ...**

Oh yes. That does tend to ... come up.

**What was it that made people think "Leslie Phillips – Casanova?"**

How funny – I even did a series called *Casanova*. I think the looks, and the voice, and the fact I could play them straight, and yet be funny.



**Do you still get responses from women at 80?**

Oh my God, yes! From all over the world. Wanting photos and sending me theirs.

**Do they send you anything else – clothing, for example?**

Well, some girl in America makes shirts for me.

**Unsolicited?**

Yes – there's one sitting over there with her photograph inside it. I don't wear them.

**Have you ever felt typecast as an English smoothie?**

Typcasting means success. Your bank manager's happy and your agent's happy. But you can get that and not be too happy about it – I've been through all that. I still go through it.

**And what's been the best work you've ever done?**

I played Falstaff at the RSC. Although I don't look like him.

**You're not fat enough.**

Thank you. Ronnie Barker's

**CHARM OFFENSIVE**  
Someone this laid-back needs a chair with a sturdy back ...

more the right shape. But I did it well and I'm very proud of it.

**This sits uneasily with all the catchphrases. Presumably you don't like them very much?**

I get pulled into them because there are so many. This thing of "Helloooo"; if anybody hears me say that they fall off their seats. I don't know why. People would like me to do that continually. It's not annoying, but you would sooner be doing something else than saying "hello" all the time.

**What about "ding-dong", where did that come from?**

Ding-dong most people don't realise ... I met this guy, Diana's lover – what's his name?

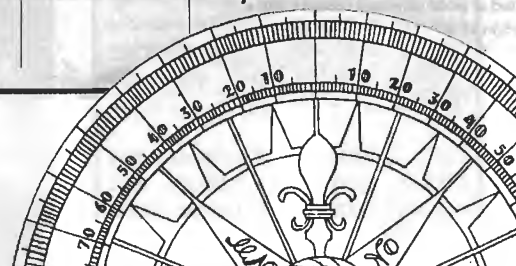
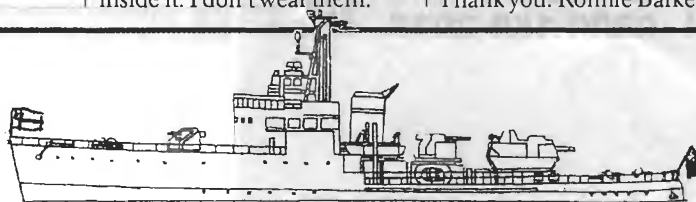
**James Hewitt.**

Hewitt, that's right. He's been using ding-dong, and I saw him the other night at some awards ceremony. As soon as he saw me he went, "Ding-dong!" I said, "I heard you use that the other day ... incorrectly." "What do you mean?" he said. "Ding-dong means jolly nice girl, doesn't it?" I said, "No it doesn't, actually." When it was first used, my character was called Jack Bell, so when he saw a girl he went "ding-dong". Hewitt had no idea about that. Over the years ding-dong has clicked and it's now used all over the world.

**One final question: what would you like as your epitaph?**

I wouldn't want "Carry On" on my gravestone. Unfortunately, it's highly likely that it will go on my gravestone because of television. It's revived all those films. I'm not ashamed of them, but I got out of that because I wanted to move on.

**Leslie Phillips was talking to Benji Wilson**





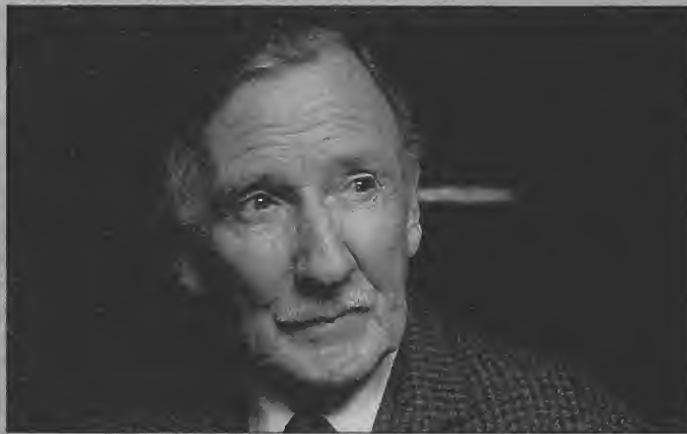
## Radio choice

### Gillian Reynolds

**Oh I Say! Leslie Phillips at 80**

Radio 4, 11.30 am

Leslie Phillips has been an actor for 70 years, with a range that runs gracefully from Shakespeare to sitcom. But it's those raunchy old roles from *Carry On* films, lightly seasoned with his daft officer on radio's *The Navy Lark*, that seem to have fixed him as King Leer in headline writers' consciousness and made him a cult figure among the louts on panel games like BBC TV's *Never Mind the Buzzcocks*. Here, he talks about some



The story of my life: a look at Leslie Phillips' enduring career (Radio 4, 11.30 am)

of his favourite performances (including, I hope, his glorious one as Peter Tinniswood's master of political disillusion, Sir Plympton Makepeace, MP).

## Radio choice

**Oh I Say! Leslie Phillips at 80**

R4, 11.30am-12noon

Having spent 70 of his 80 years in public performance, Leslie 'ding dong' Phillips (right) celebrates his birthday with a stroll down memory lane. The show covers his child acting career following his father's death, the post-war film comedies that are still his trademark and the later move to more stimulating work such as Shakespeare and Chekhov. If the format – just clips and his recollections, no interviewer or narrator – can sound a little self-congratulatory, there's still that voice to savour. **BW**



## CHOICES



REX

It's hard to think of the ever-debonnair Leslie Phillips as being 80, but this true gent wears his age with dignity

**Oh I Say!**  
**Leslie Phillips at 80**

11.30am R4

"I don't think there's another bloke in England that can match it really," says Leslie Phillips on having worked 70 of his 80 years as an actor. Spot on, sir! There's a deliciously comfortable feel to this programme as Phillips talks us through his career from child actor supporting his family after his father died, his first big break in the 50s when he went off to Hollywood, his return home to the *Carry On* films and classic radio comedies like *The Navy Lark*, up to his more "respectable" straight roles in theatre and TV. While some male actors resent their ageing faces, Phillips has been quite happy with the changing fortunes getting on a bit has brought to him: "When you get older there's an element of the romantic that does tend to drop away – but I began to get some rather good character parts in film and TV." Still, there can't be many 80-year-olds who can be guaranteed to attract a brace of lovely ladies every time they go out in public. So ding dong to you, Mr Phillips! Read his *One Final Question* on page 138.

Producer Martin I. Zoua

**11.30 Oh I Say! Leslie Phillips at 80**

One of our most charming and versatile actors celebrates this special birthday and shares some of his favourite moments as a star of stage, screen and radio. Producer Viv Beeby

**One Final Question: page 138**



The celebrations for Leslie Phillips' birthday in April 2004 was supported by a substantial amount of journalism and appearances on radio and TV. We are still trying to catch up on the event and will welcome any cuttings, information and/or articles that you still have.

The Society forwarded the above card to Leslie and wished him many many more such days.



1. PERTWEE: Yes - well that might take quite a time sir. I mean at three o'clock in the morning, the Cornish countryside is not exactly chock-a-block with passers by is it, sir?
2. NO.1: Just a minute - I'm not sure but that looks as if it might be the outline of a cottage just over there.
3. PERTWEE: Where? Oh I see what you mean sir. Yes - it could well be. If somebody lives there they're not going to be too pleased at being knocked up at this hour though sir.
4. NO.1: I prefer to look at it another way. If we don't get back to Plymouth, Old Thunderguts isn't going to be too pleased either.
5. PHILLIPS: I see what you mean sir. Let's knock them up.
6. PERTWEE: If there's any luck at all it might be a pub.
7. NO.1: I doubt it but let's go and see. Lead on Chief.
8. PHILLIPS: Here I say - do you mind - Leslie's the navigator, you know.
9. NO.1: Possibly but after the miles you've led us tonight I would suggest you navigate yourself back to the sea and jump in it again. Lead on Chief. We're nearly there.
10. PERTWEE: Aye aye sir.
11. PHILLIPS: I must say it's a pretty little place. Ivy round the door, thatched roof - a real bit of old England - the sort of cottage a chap.....
12. PERTWEE: Mr. Phillips sir.



1. PHILLIPS: Yes Chief?
2. PERTWEE: Before you consider buying the property how about knocking and asking them where the rosy brickdust it is?
3. PHILLIPS: Oh yes.
4. FX: DOOR KNOCKER
5. PHILLIPS: Wakey wakey - anyone about?
6. CHARLIE: (OFF) Yes I am - right behind you.
7. PHILLIPS: )  
PERTWEE: )  
Aaaaah!
8. NO.1: Who said that?
9. CHARLIE: I did. Don't none of you move because I've got you covered. You're my prisoners.
10. FX: DOOR OPENS
11. MARTHA: Charlie Granthemum - have you forgotten your door key again?
12. CHARLIE: Put that light out! Do you want us to get bombed with leaflets again?
13. PERTWEE: Here what's going on?
14. CHARLIE: You've been caught. Now what have you done with your parachutes eh?
15. NO.1: Parachutes?
16. MARTHA: Charlie heard your bomber go over earlier so we knew you'd be about.



1. PHILLIPS: What's she talking about?
2. CHARLIE: By jiminy Martha, they speak jolly good English don't they? You'd never believe they were German spies would you?
3. NO.1: Oh now look here,.....
4. CHARLIE: Don't move. Don't trifle with me, you Nazi - I've got the whole striking power of the Home Guard behind me so watch yourself.
5. PERTWEE: Stone me sir - look. That uniform he's wearing. He is a Home Guard.
6. CHARLIE: Yes and I'm guarding it. Now then which one of you is Hitler?
7. NO.1: Who?
8. CHARLIE: 'Itler. I reckon it's this one with the blond wig.
9. PHILLIPS: What?
10. CHARLIE: Well maybe it's dyed - yes it is. It's going dark at the roots.
11. PHILLIPS: It can't be. I gave it a rinse yesterday.
12. CHARLIE: No arguments. Inside the lot of you. You're the second lot I've caught tonight.
13. PERTWEE: Second lot?
14. MARTHA: Yes. Charlie caught a great big fat one. We think he's Goering.
15. PERTWEE: Stone me - Fatso. It must be Johnson.



1. PHILLIPS: Lummee - no wonder we never met the enemy.
2. CHARLIE: You've met them now. Inside, Hitler.
3. PHILLIPS: I am not Hitler.
4. NO.1: Look - the war's over. The Home Guard stood down years ago. You must have been told surely.
5. CHARLIE: Oh we got all those propaganda messages but they didn't work. We're still on duty. Charlie Granthemum...
6. PERTWEE: Who?
7. CHARLIE: Me. I'm not standing down until I get a letter signed by Mr. Chamberlain personally.
8. PERTWEE: (WHISPER) Sir.
9. NO.1: What?
10. PERTWEE: When it comes to finding nuts, I think we've copped the kernel in a private's uniform.
11. NO.1: Sssh. Mr. Phillips will think we're talking about him.
12. FX: DOOR SHUTS. BOLTS SHOT
13. MARTHA: Door safely locked Charlie. What next?
14. CHARLIE: Lock them in the larder with the other two of course.
15. PHILLIPS: Hey now just a minute - I don't want to be larded in a locker...er...lockered in a load of lard.....
16. NO.1: All right Mr. Phillips - I'll deal with this. Now look here Mr. Granthemum - you can't just go round locking people up in larders. It's not. .well'..... it's not done.



1. CHARLIE: It is here.
2. MARTHA: Shall I open the larder Charlie?
3. CHARLIE: No not yet Martha. Goering and this thin mate might try to rush us. We'd better be fully armed. Now where's my pike?
4. MARTHA: In the little shed out the back but it's got a puncture in the back tyre.
5. CHARLIE: No, no, no. Pike, dear - not bike.
6. MARTHA: Oh that's out in the little shed too, Charlie.
7. NO.1: If it was near your bike I expect that's what punctured it. (LAUGHS)
8. PERTWEE: Charming isn't it? Held prisoner by a nut in a twenty year old uniform who wants to prod at us with a pike and shove us in a cupboard full of cornflakes - and all Mr. Murray does is make whimsical remarks and gay little jollities that end up with a (ECHO LAUGH) Well I for one am not going to (ECHO LAUGH) back... . sir.
9. NO.1: Oh...er...whoops, sorry pardon.
10. PHILLIPS: Here I say - have you noticed the wallpaper? It's all old posters.
11. NO.1: So it is. Careless talk costs lives. Give us the tools we'll finish the job. V for Victory.
12. PERTWEE: Eat more carrots - drink a pinta milka day - I wonder how that one got in? Join the Spitfire Fund - Save your Salvage - Go to it.



1. PHILLIPS: I remember that one. I always wondered how you could go to it when you didn't know where it was.
2. CHARLIE: I can tell you where it is. It's next door to the little hut out the back.
3. FX: THUMPING ON DOOR
4. MARTHA: Charlie - I think Goering is getting a bit uppitty.
5. CHARLIE: Right. Into the kitchen all of you. I've got you covered with this shot gun so watch yourselves.
6. NO.1: Better do as he says, gentlemen.
7. PERTWEE: Who was thinking of arguing?
8. MARTHA: Shall I open up the larder, Charlie?
9. CHARLIE: Yes but keep out of me line of fire.
10. FX: DOOR UNLOCKED AND OPENED
11. JOHNSON: Poooooerrouff! Air! At long last - air. Phew. Lovely stuff.
12. TAFFY: Not that I'm complaining mind, Fatso - but if you'd been the normal size we'd have been all right for a lot longer.
13. PHILLIPS: You were right, Chief - it is Johnson and Goldstein.
14. NO.1: How long have you two been in there?
15. TAFFY: Oh hullo sir - I suppose it's only about an hour but seeing as it's such a small larder and seeing as my mate here is a bit on the lumpy side - it feels like about six weeks.



More next time